

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6731

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SUBJECT: OPPOSITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACT EXPRESS CONCERNS

SUMMARY: IN SEPARTE CONVERSATIONS ON SEPT 1, OPPOSITION
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS FERNANDO ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA
AND JAIME GIL ROBLES TOLD EMBOFFS THAT DISSOLUTION OF
CORTES AND CALLEING OF FREE ELECTIONS WERE ESSENTIAL TO
TRANSITION. CONCERNING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNITY, THEY
SEE CURRENT INITIATIVES BY CD-ORIENTED GOVT MINISTERS AS
MANEUVERS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN POSITIONS THROUGH
CO OPTATION OF OPPOSITION CD "EQUIPO. END SUMMARY
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1. DISSOLUTION OF THE CORTES. ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN TO US OVER THE GOVT'S DRIF ON REFORM AND THE ABILITY OF THE CORTES TO OBSTRUCT AMMEDMENT OF TH CONSTITUTION. CONSEQUENTLY, HE IS URGING GOVT LEADERS TO CONVINCE THE KING THAT HE MUST DISSOLVE THE CORTES, ISSUE A DECREE LAW GOVERNING ELECTIONS, AND CONVOKE ELECTIONS FOR A DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENT.

2. ACCORDING TO ALVAREZ, SUCH A COURSE IS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE CORTES WILL NEVER "SIGN ITS OWN DEATH CERTIFICATE", AS WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE GOVT'S DIFFICULTIES IN THE CORTES WITH THE RECENT PENAL CODE REVISIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF OBTAINING THE 2/3 MAJORITY NECESSARY TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION. DISSOLUTION ALVAREZ CONTENDS, WOULD BE CONSTITUTIONAL BECAUSE THE CORTES IS NOW FUNCTIONING UNDER AN EXTENSION (PRORROGA) DECREED BY THE KING, WHICH THE KING CAN TERMINATE AT ANY TIME.

3. ALVAREZ CONCERNS WERE ECHOED AND EMPHASIZED BY POPULAR DEMOCRATIC REFEDERATION (FPD) LEADER JAIME GIL ROBLES. DURING A CONVERSATION WHICH WAS INTERRUPTED BY A STREAM OF PHONE CALLS ON POLITICAL MATTERS. GIL ROBLES TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE KING MUST DISSOLVE THE CORTES AND CALL FREE ELECTIONS "THE RPYAL COUP, IF YOU LIKE" IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE TRANSITION FROM IRRETRIEVABLY BOGGING DOWN, GIL ROBLES BELIEVES THAT THE US MUST HELP CONVINCE THE KING AND THE MILITARY THAT SUCH A COURSE IS NECESSARY FOR THE COUNTRY AND THE MONARCHY.

4. THE CURRENT SITUATION. ACCORDING TO GIL ROBLES ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA, IN AN AUGUST 30 MEETING WITH GOVT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (SEE BELOW) ASKED THE FIVE MINISTERS PRESENT A NUMBER OF BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GOVT'S OR ABLE TO ANSWER. AS A RESULT, GIL ROBLES IS INCREASINGLY UNEASY ABOUT THE GOVT'S INTENTIONS AND CABILITIES CONCERNING REFORM. HE THINKS THAT, AS A RESULT OF THE SEPT 4 OPPOSITION "SUMMIT", WHICH THE FPD WILL ATTEND AS AN OBSERVER, THE OPPOSITION

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MAY WELL PRESENT TO THE GOVT WITHIN TWO TO THREE WEEKS A COHERENT CONSENSUS "PROGRAM" FOR REFORM. IF THE GOVT DOES NOT RESPOND EFFECTIVELY WITH A ACCEPTABLE OR AT LEAST NEGOTIABLE PROGRAM OF ITS OWN, THE POLITICAL SITUATION WOULD THEN DETERIORATE RAPIDLY.

5. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNITY. ALVAREZ DE MIRANDA MET AUGUST 30, IN A MUCH PUBLICIZED GER TOGETHER

WITH FIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ORIENTED GOVT MINISTERS (OSORIO REGUERA OREJA, LAVILLA, AND DE LA MATA) AND OTHER CD LEADERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PARTIDO POPULAR, TACITO AND THE UNION DEMOCRATICA ESPANOLA (UDE). THE PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED APPROACHES TO CD UNITY. ALTHOUGH NO CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED, ALVAREZ REITERATED TO US HIS PREVIOUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT UNIFICATION WOULD BE NO EASY TASK, GIVEN THE RESISTANCE OF SOME ELEMENTS OF THE FIVE PARTY OPPOSITION CD "EQUIPO" TO AN ALLIANCE WITH ANY CD GROUPINGS IN ANY WAY ASSOCIATED WITH THE FRANCO REGIME. (HE ADDED PRIVATELY THAT JOSE MARIA GIL ROBLES WAS THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT AND HE BELIEVED THAT GOVT LINKED GROUPS WOULD HAVE TO WORK THROUGH JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ.) HE SAID HE CAUTIONED OSORIO AND HIS COLLEAGUES THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES CAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNITY BE ACHIEVED IF IT APPEARS TO BE A GOVT ORCHESTRATED EFFORT TO CO OPT SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY.

6. ACCORDING TO GIL ROBLES SON, ALVAREZ IS ACTING ON HIS OWN, BUT AS A KIND OF UNOFFICIAL GO BETWEEN GOVT CD ELEMENTS AND THE OPPOSITION "EQUIPO/ HE REITERATED AND STRONGLY EMPHASIZED ALVAREZ SUSPICIONS THAT CURRENT UNIFICATION INITIATIVES BY PRESIDENCY MINISTER OSORIO AND OTHER GOVT LINKED FIGURES CONSTITUTE A MANEUVER ON THEIR PART TO STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN POSITION IN ANY FUTURE ELECTIONS. BOTH ALVAREZ AND GIL ROBLES TOLD US THAT, IF OSORIO AND OTHER GOVT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WILL STEP DOWN FROM THEIR POSTS AND AWAY FROM THE GOVT, THEREBY NEGOTIATING WITH THE "EQUIPO" AS EQUALS", THERE IS EVERY BASIS FOR EVENTUAL UNIFICATION. BUT UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES THEIR MOTIVES ARE HIGHLY SUSPECT.

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7. COMMENT: THERE IS CONCERN EXPRESSED IN SOME OPPOSITION QUARTERS OVER WHAT IS VIEWED AS GROWING GOVERNMENTAL INDECISIVENESS ON REFORM, AND PERHAPS EVEN A REVERSION TO ARIAS GOVT. FORM. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE GOVT IS HOLDING ITS CARDS VERY CLOSE TO ITS CHEST, THE OPPOSITION AT THIS POINT IS LONG ON RUMORS AND VERY SHORT OF SOLID INFORMATION. MOREOVER IN SOME CASES THE EXPRESSED CONCERN IS SELF SERVING. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS CLEARLY THE GOVT'S. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHAT THE GOVT PRESENTS PRESUMABLY IN MID SEPTEMBER AS ITS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROGRAM. SOME INDICATIONS FROM GOVT SOURCES OF WHAT THIS MAY BE ARE PROVIDED IN SEPARATE TELEGRAMS.

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